NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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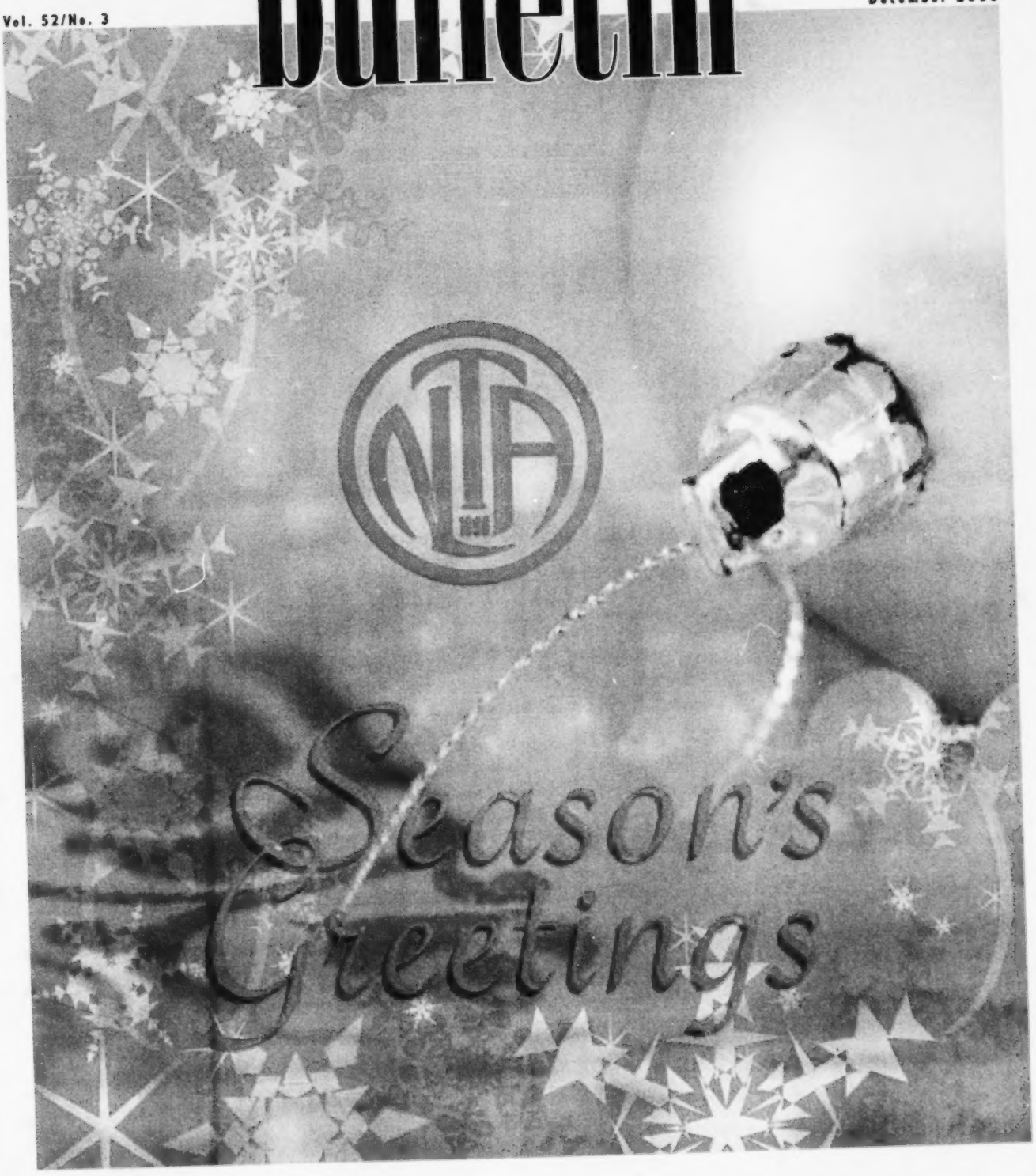
December 2008



Up Front from the President

Every year as we move into December, I always marvel at the work and accomplishments achieved by the students of this province, attained through the careful and deliberate guidance and enthusiastic motivation of our teachers. The innumerable tasks that are part of Christmas Concert preparations as well as teacher leadership and participation in community gift "drives", Christmas hamper organization, caroling for our seniors, clothing and toy projects and Foster Parent Plan fund-raisers, all attest to the many acts of generosity and kindness teachers are involved in during each Christmas season. The moments experienced and the many acts of giving inherent in these activities are indeed priceless. Allow me to thank each and every one of you for offering yourself, your talents and your time to such worthwhile endeavors.

I would like to pass along an important reminder to schools relative to the new teacher allocation model which continues to be further refined through this first full year of implemenation. After determining the number of units which should be deployed by the District to your school, the school administration and staff, in consultation with District personnel, may conclude that there still exists a very legitimate staffing need. If this occurs, then a needs-based profile can be developed by the school and sent to District office along with a full explanation of the needs to be addressed with data to support your request. As per the (Teacher Allocation) Commission's recommendation accepted by government, this school profile of needs would become part of the larger District profile or "District Report" that would, in turn, be delivered to the Department of Education well ahead of the final government budget for education for 2009-10.

At the bargaining table, your Negotiating Team has been hard at work actively pursuing improvements in areas teachers have identified as being critical to their personal and professional well-being. As you are no doubt aware, we have distributed the opening package to each teacher in the province and have completed a full two-week series of Branch meetings which provided a detailed analysis on the proposals to our members.

We have participated in negotiations with government and school district representatives during September 24-26, October 21-23 and November 21-23. We will be returning to the bargaining table during December 9-11. We have arranged for updates on collective bargaining to be sent to all teachers in the province and will strive to provide these to you on a regular basis as much as possible.

Our arguments and strategy have been well prepared and are both strong and sound. We will encourage the collective bargaining process to have every chance at success and remain hopeful and confident that we will be able to have a tentative agreement to put before teachers sooner rather than later.

On behalf of your Provincial Executive, let me offer you my most sincere wish that you all enjoy a very peaceful and merry Christmas and a truly happy and healthy New Year. May you and your families enjoy the gift of each other's company and love this holiday season, and permit me to thank you for all that you bring to your classrooms and give to your students throughout the school year.

Peace on earth and good will to one and all.

Sean

THE bulletin

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NLTA Membership Cards and Member Profile Information

If you are a new or substitute teacher and require an NLTA membership card or you are an active teacher and have lost or misplaced your NLTA membership card, please complete the Member Profile Form on the NLTA website and return it to us asap. The Member Profile Form can be found at:

www.nlta.nl.ca

(click the Forms Online link on the left hand side)

If you are an active or substitute teacher and have not yet completed your NLTA Member Profile Form, please do so. Your Association is currently in the process of setting up a "Members Only" section on the NLTA website and teachers will not have access to the "Members Only" section if they have not completed the profile information.

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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

ARNOLD'S COVE

Tricentia Student Council motivates fellow students

On Friday, October 17, three students from Tricentia Academy who attended the Canadian Student Leadership Conference shared an impressive experience with their school. Just days after helping to organize an assembly and serving rice to their peers in an effort to raise money for the 'Two Villages Project', Tricentia's Student Council were able to share an inspiring session from their time in Summerside, P.E.I. Hoping to provoke their school to "Think First", they invited the altruistic ensemble, Absolute. Between the rock concert music, video testimonials and passionate personal accounts, the audience was captivated and motivated to think about how their actions affect others.

Students at Tricentia Academy enjoy the music of Absolute.

GOULDS

Private public partnerships and education

"For the most part, private public partnerships are a proven method of mobilizing diverse segments of society for the greater good of all," said Harold Mullowney, a teacher at St. Kevin's High School in Goulds. "This becomes abundantly clear in a time of diminished public support and declining volunteer bases. Nonetheless, when the requisite champion or benefactor emerges to catalyze community support, projects often take on a life of their own."

Such was the case when the Bidgood family donated 38 acres of land on the outskirts of St. John's, to be developed by and for the people of Goulds as a recreational, educational and heritage park. The land encompasses sections of Boreal forest, wetland, grassland and semi-barren areas as well as a fallow field section.

On October 2, 2008 seven teachers and 25 students from St. Kevin's High School embarked on a daylong exercise to support such a project. With the assistance of the Grand Concourse authority and MUN Botanical Gardens they set out to do a taxonomical survey of the flora on the donated property. The project was a cross-curricular event involving Biology and Geography classes. Assistance and expertise was also required from the school's environmental sciences as well as industrial arts, fine arts and computer technology programs.

Marc Portier of the Grand Concourse Authority gives instructions to students at St. Kevin's High.

The students returned to the school with over 200 pressed samples to be catalogued, photographed, sketched, described, mounted and assembled into PowerPoint presentations for course credit. The final result of the cross-curricular event was a donation of over 900 person hours of collection, research and

documentation as well as an immeasurable community buy in to the project.

"With this early first step it is hoped that the students of St. Kevin's and citizens of Goulds will continue to utilize and develop this tremendous gift for the educational, recreational and heritage purposes it was intended," said Mr. Mullowney. "Good corporate citizens are sometimes hard to find but when they do emerge, their gifts, although hard to match, require our collective support and protection. For many of our students it was a chance to do some real scientific work and make a contribution that will have a lasting impact."

DEER LAKE

School celebrates Kids Eat Smart "Walk to Breakfast"

Elwood Elementary School in Deer Lake celebrated the Kids Eat Smart "Walk to Breakfast" on Friday, October 24, 2008. Students in grades Kindergarten to five participated in the province-wide walk and raised nearly $450, which will be matched by the Kids Eat Smart Foundation in support of the Breakfast Program at the school.

Students at Elwood Elementary participate in the Kids Eat Smart "Walk to Breakfast".

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY

Teacher outing provides great social connection

Wellness is a hot topic these days and restoring your energy is as easy as taking a walk in the woods. Members of the Lake Melville Branch of the NLTA did exactly that on a beautiful fall day in October. Walking the trails of the Birch Brook Nordic Ski Club near Happy Valley-Goose Bay provided excellent physical exercise as well as a great social connection between teachers. "The beauty of nature was restorative in itself," said Sandra Quigley, President of the Lake Melville Branch. "This is the third year that we've held our nature walk and it promises to become something of a tradition. Talk about low stress … it's as easy as picking a time and place, packing a lunch and lacing up. Had a great time!"

Members of the Lake Melville Branch enjoy their nature walk.

WITLESS BAY

School participates in environmental education program

St. Bernard's Elementary School in Witless Bay was chosen to participate in Green Street – an environmental education program which endeavors to actively engage students and teachers in environmental learning and sustainability education. The school's Grade 6 students will be participating in this program and will share their learning with the school throughout the year.

On October 21, St. Bernard's held a "One Million Acts of Green" kick off at the school. "This event was an information session for everyone in the school community to learn about the program and all students, staff and family visiting the school were asked to wear school colors on that day," said Carolyn Campbell, Music Teacher and Assistant Principal at St. Bernard's.

St. Bernard's identified two goals for the school for that day. Students were asked to bring a refillable water bottle to school to use instead of the paper cups at the water coolers and the Grade Five Green Team worked with their teachers to check the tire pressure on the teachers' cars. Parents were also invited to have their tire pressure checked.

As part of the school's agreement to participate, all students, families and community members were asked to commit to an "act of green" and register this act in the on-line registry at www.onemillionactsofgreen.com. As a sign of support for this initiative, the school has posted further information about the program on their school website rather than sending home paper copies – every act helps! "We hope you will join us as we commit to performing 'One Million Acts of Green' and educate ourselves about the environment and how we can all work together to protect and sustain our world," said Ms. Campbell.

Members of St. Bernard's Elementary Grade Five Green Team performing a rap song to celebrate One Million Acts of Green.

ST. JOHN'S

Macdonald Drive Junior High projects help those in need

Mr. Keith Coombs, Principal of Macdonald Drive Junior High (MDJH) in St. John's put a challenge out to all the schools in the St. John's Metro area and Mount Pearl to compete with MDJH in the number of food items donated at the school's Thanksgiving Food Drive.

Mr. Coombs lost his challenge, but there were no real losers since Macdonald Drive Junior High had the most successful food drive ever and to those schools who took on the challenge, they raised the most food ever as well. The challenge provided a very successful food drive overall and also raised awareness of the need for food for those in the community who are less fortunate than we are. MDJH would like to thank the Special Services and the Random Acts of Kindness Committee for the collection of the food, the tally and the deposit of food items onto the Metrobus for delivery to the Community Food Sharing Association warehouse.

MDJH Principal Keith Coombs (left), along with teachers and students, on route to deliver food to the Community Food Sharing Association.

On October 15, the students and staff of Macdonald Drive Junior High School participated in the "Two Villages" project by donating all or part of their lunch money for a bowl of rice. The purpose of this initiative was to help fund a seed bank in Wollo, Ethiopia. The project was initiated by the Random Acts of Kindness Committee and everyone gave generously to this worthwhile project.

"Our school is very proud to have participated in this project," said Joan McCue, Macdonald Drive Junior High School Counsellor. "Hopefully we have given some hope to the families in Wollo, Ethopia and help in enabling them to fulfill their dreams of a better tomorrow – in that they will now be able to grow food for their own use."

Students at Macdonald Drive Junior High participate in the "Two Villages" project.

On October 24, the school held it's 4th Annual Gulu Walk. What is Gulu? Gulu is a safe place for the children of Northern Uganda. Every day, children of Northern Uganda have been abducted and forced to be child soldiers by the Lord's Resistance Army. Every night, thousands of children became "night commuters" and would walk from their little villages to safer places like Gulu so that they would not be captured as child soldiers. They walk back to their villages in the morning.

The students of Homeroom 9-218 organized the Gulu Walk with their Religion teacher, Ms. Leigh Ann Ryan. The students were quite eager and willing to make this project a success. They created a banner, orange posters and there were orange footsteps all over the school with information and messages about Gulu. Besides raising awareness of the plight of the children in Northern Uganda, the students raised money by selling Gulu bracelets, orange popcorn and orange lollipops for this worthwhile cause.

MDJH students hit the road during their annual Gulu Walk.

NLTA Appointment Notice

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Steve Brooks to the position of Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division, effective October 27, 2008.

Steve has an extensive background as a district leader, school administrator and teacher. He joins the NLTA from his position with the Eastern School District where he has been a Senior Education Officer. Previous to that he had been employed with the Vista School District as an Associate Assistant Director of Education. He has held positions as administrator at Discovery Collegiate in Bonavista, at Bishop White School in Port Rexton and has taught at Elwood Regional High School in Deer Lake and Hampden Academy in Hampden.

Steve has been a member of numerous committees dealing with Safe and Caring Schools, the planning committee for several of the AGMs of the School Administrators' Council, Leadership at Work, Professional Issues in Teaching, and many others dealing with local education issues. He has been involved with the NLTA at the branch level, as a member of one of the Provincial Standing Committees and has also been successful in obtaining external funding from various sources for such initiatives as youth programming, employability skills, youth internship programs, innovative schools, and community access programs, to name a few. He has numerous accomplishments in the area of curriculum development and has published in *Prospects*, *The School Administrators Journal*, and *Insight Communications Inc*.

Steve has a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Memorial University, as well as a Bachelor of Education, High School Social Studies and Religious Studies and a Bachelor of Arts, Political Science. He has completed numerous training programs, has a strong reputation as an educational leader and has presented at conferences, locally, nationally and internationally. In 2001 he was recipient of the School Administrators' Council Distinguished Principal/Vice-Principal of the Year Award.

Steve can be contacted at the NLTA via email at sbrooks@nlta.nl.ca or 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 230.

Steve Brooks

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

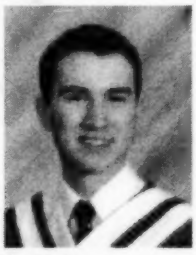
NLTA Scholarship winners announced for 2007-08

Six Newfoundland and Labrador students who completed high school last June have been awarded NLTA scholarships for 2007-08. They are: Katherine Andrews (Holy Spirit High School), daughter of Janice Chaytor-Andrews, Conception Bay South; Gabrielle Burke (Stephenville High School), daughter of John D. Burke, Port au Port East; David Feehan (Gonzaga High School), son of Mary Tracey-Feehan, St. John's; Danielle Leonard (Gonzaga High School), daughter of Thomas Leonard and Carolyn Bartlett, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's; Catherine Orr (Mount Pearl Senior High), daughter of Claire Pitl, Mount Pearl; and Michael Walsh (Clarenville High School), son of Thomas Walsh, Clarenville.

The scholarships are awarded annually to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members of the NLTA and are valued at $1,000 each. Awards are based on the criteria used by the Department of Education for the selection of provincial scholarship recipients.

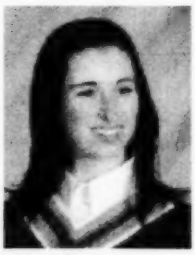
Katherine Andrews

Gabrielle Burke

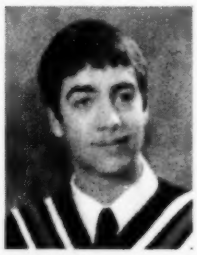


David Feehan

Danielle Leonard



Catherine Orr



Michael Walsh

NLTA Medal winner announced

Jody White, a native of Change Islands, NL, has been awarded the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Medal for the 2008 Spring Convocation at Memorial University. Jody convocated this past May with a Bachelor of Education (Primary/Elementary) Degree and convocated in October with a Bachelor of Arts with an English Major and Folklore Minor. He completed his internship in a Year 2 Class at Fawbert and Barnards Primary School in Old Harlow, England. Jody is currently employed with Memorial University as the On-Campus Recruitment Events Coordinator with the Office of Student Recruitment. This position allows him to stay connected with the volunteer programs which he had, and continues to remain, committed to. In his new role he collaborates with leaders and students in such programs as Memorial Ambassador and LEAP! and finds this to be very rewarding.

NLTA President Sean Noah presents Jody White with his 2008 NLTA Medal.

The NLTA Medal is awarded annually to a student enrolled in the Faculty of Education who, during his/her academic career, has made an outstanding contribution to the Faculty of Education and to the University. The recipient must be a graduating student and have a consistently good academic record in the professional courses required for the degree. The award is made by Memorial University on the recommendation of the Dean of Education.

W. KEITH LAKE, 1951 - 2008

With deep and abiding sadness we mourn the loss of our friend, Keith Lake, who passed into eternal rest on July 15, 2008 following a lengthy illness. Keith had known for a very long time that he was unlikely to recover, yet he battled courageously every day to achieve a moral victory over the debilitating symptoms of his illness. He golfed and visited friends until he was no longer able to do so but long past that time we visited him at his home to play cards, listen to music and to have a " yarn".

Despite the severity of his illness Keith retained his excellent organizational skills and his sense of humour. It came as no surprise to anyone who knew him that "final arrangements" had been made and that he had chosen his favourite brief Scripture reading and hymns for his funeral service. He was adamant that only a verse or two of his favourite hymns be sung in church and that there be no singing at the graveside; not one for long services was our Keith. We can only envision his smile and the twinkle in his eyes as his choice of Leonard Cohen's "Closing Time" played while we carried him from Bethany United Church. His awareness (and perhaps intent) of raising an eyebrow or two and having a little fun, even in those circumstances, reminded us of the Keith we knew throughout his lifetime.

Keith graduated from MUN in 1974 and began his teaching career at Ste. Hilda's School in Bay L'Argent that same year. The following year he moved to Jamieson Academy in Burin where he taught until his retirement in March 2001. The high regard in which he was held as a teacher was evidenced by the many colleagues and former students who visited the family and attended his funeral service.

Keith had been an ardent supporter of the NLTA from the beginning to the end of his career. He served for many years in various positions within the Burin-Marystown Branch including secretary, communications officer and branch president and attended many annual/biennial conventions. Indeed, as some of us recall, it was at NLTA's 1991 convention that his illness first manifested itself.

There is much more one could say about Keith but we suspect that being the private person he was he would feel enough has already been said. Suffice it to say that Keith shared Sartre's belief, "What is not possible is not to choose." He made his often very difficult decisions and he chose, as much as is humanly possible, the path he trod.

Keith is predeceased by his son Kevin and his father Roy. Left to mourn his passing are his wife Carol Ann, son Kirk (Lenore), grandchildren Tyler and Brittany, mother Stella, brother Pierce, and many other relatives, friends and colleagues.
(Submitted by Fred Douglas and Ed White)

MARY MERCEDES O'NEILL, 1912 - 2008

On August 23, 2008 we were saddened by the passing of Miss Mary Mercedes O'Neill, at age 95, after a short illness. Born in Bay Roberts, NL in 1912, Miss O'Neill devoted her life to the education of Newfoundland children. To her, teaching was a vocation, a calling that was clearly evident in her commitment to her students. Starting in Shearstown in 1931, she taught across the island, in Deer Lake, Stephenville, Bay Roberts, Petty Harbour and spent 23 years at St. Teresa's School in St. John's, where she retired as vice principal in 1977.

Miss O'Neill's motto was "compassion was more effective than the strap" and the effect this quiet, gentle lady had on her students was profound. Highly respected, she inspired an excitement about learning that led each student to strive for their personal best. Even today, though retired from the profession for 31 years, the large number of fellow teachers and former pupils, some pupils themselves in their seventies, who came to pay their respects was amazing. Their memories and stories of Miss O'Neill clearly demonstrated the positive effect she made on their lives; the lives she helped change and the futures she helped brighten.
(Submitted by Don Aspell)

Keith Lake

Mary Mercedes O'Neill

Elizabeth (Libby) O'Neill

It is with great sadness that the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association announces the death of a long-time staff member. Elizabeth (Libby) O'Neill passed away on November 10, 2008 following a brave and courageous battle with cancer.

Libby retired in June 2006 as Assistant in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA following 26 years of full-time service and several years of part-time service. Libby was always ready with a smile and always one of the first to offer help when needed. She was a wonderful lady and will be sadly missed by family, friends and colleagues alike.

Libby leaves to mourn her husband Kevin; son Gary (Nancy); loving grandchildren Sean and Katelyn and step-grandchildren Maxim and Sarah; as well as a large circle of family and friends.

February 13, 2009

Janeway Day 2009

Every year, Janeway Day in the schools provides an opportunity for students and teachers to help other children. Since 1986 students and teachers have donated more than $826,000 to the Janeway.

Here's how to participate in Janeway Day 2009:

Ask students and teachers to forego the equivalent of recess monies for one day. That's their donation to the Janeway.

All monies will be forwarded to the Janeway to help the children of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Caring and Sharing for the Janeway.

A project of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

The Season of Giving

by EDWARD HANCOCK

It is indeed a pleasure to again have the opportunity to extend best wishes to all our members and their families as the Christmas season rapidly approaches. In what seems like only a few weeks since the new school year started in early September, time has managed to hurry us through nearly four months of the school year. You have all undoubtedly had a very busy Fall with the usual intrusion of professional responsibilities into your personal life; hence, the necessity of using the coming holiday period as a respite and an opportunity to restore some quality time to your personal and family life.

There is a quote attributed to Winston Churchill which states, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." This quote is particularly apt for those in the teaching profession which, by its very nature, is a "giving" profession. While the Christmas season may be a focal point for giving throughout our society, teachers give of themselves every day to provide the best learning opportunities for the students in their care. Thus, the whole school year is the "season for giving" in our school system. It is therefore doubly important that you take advantage of the Christmas season as the first extended break in the school year to enjoy a period of relaxation away from the usual demands of work for pleasant times with family, friends and loved ones. The rush of activities leading up to Christmas can indeed add to the hectic pace of life so it is that much more important that the Christmas period itself be utilized to slow that pace and find some "down time". Just as you engage in the "giving" of teaching throughout the school year, at Christmas it is important to give yourself permission to relax and enjoy some "me" time.

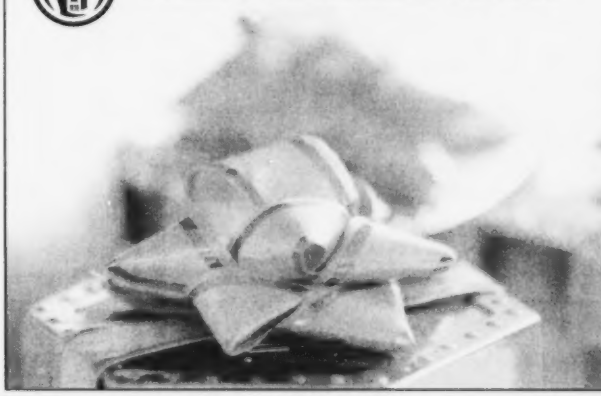
On behalf of all the staff who work on your behalf here at the NLTA Office, I extend best wishes for a joyful Christmas time and a safe and prosperous New Year. May the peace and love that are the essence of the Christmas message be with you throughout the holiday season and afterwards.

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

~ Charles Dickens

Edward Hancock is Executive Director of the NLTA.

NLTA Christmas Hours



Please be advised that
the NLTA Building
will be closed
from December 24th
to January 2nd (*inclusive*)
to allow staff to enjoy
the holiday season.

School Rep Seminars 2008

This past October the NLTA school representative seminars were held in Deer Lake, Plum Point and Clarenville as part of the NLTA's initiative to meet with school representatives each year. The intent is to keep school representatives informed and up to date on NLTA programs and services as well as inform new school representatives of their important role within the structure of the NLTA.

Teams of administrative staff from the NLTA planned and carried out the day and a half sessions throughout the province. The agenda items included a viewing of *The NLTA and You* video, sessions on NLTA programs and services, a group discussion on What's a School Rep to Do?, which involved a review of case studies of various situations that school representatives may have to deal with, as well as a review of several case studies for review and input. The sessions were also attended by Branch Presidents and members of the Provincial Executive.

A question and answer session was included with each session and school representatives had an opportunity to provide feedback as well as ask questions on any issue that concerned them.

Feedback from the seminars was very positive with comments such as "very informative and comprehensive", "I learned a lot today that I wished I was aware of when I first started teaching", "covers practically everything that one should know about the NLTA".

NLTA staff found the sessions to be just as rewarding as they were able meet one on one with the NLTA school representatives and provide them with essential information about the NLTA.

The province has been divided into nine regions and three seminars will be held each fall so that schools will be provided the opportunity to have a representative attend a seminar every three years. The next series of seminars will be held in the fall of 2009. A notification of dates and locations will be announced as soon as they become available.

Teacher Induction Ceremony

The eighth Teacher Induction Ceremony took place on October 17, 2008 at the Battery Hotel and Convention Centre in St. John's. The first-ever Induction Ceremony was held in May 2005 during the Spring Convocation. In 2005, the NLTA and the Faculty of Education made it a priority to see that such an event was established for new inductees into our profession. Since then this event has occurred each Spring and Fall Convocation.

Over 400 students, their families and guests were in attendance at the ceremony. As well, some invited guests for the event included: Dr. Marian Fushell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Primary, Elementary and Secondary Education, with the Department of Education; Dr. David Dibbon, Dean of Education from the MUN Faculty of Education; Dean Ingram, a member of the NLTA Provincial Executive Council; Wayne Noseworthy, Staff Relations Specialist, Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association; and Allister Dyke, Assistant Director, Human Resources, Eastern School District. There were also numerous MUN professors in attendance who wanted to wish their students well. Master of Ceremonies for this year's event was Lesley-Ann Browne, Communications Officer with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

The first item on the program was the address to new teacher candidates. This occurred in two parts – the first by Dr. David Dibbon, the second part by Dean Ingram of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Dr. Fushell brought greetings to the new teacher candidates and their guests on behalf of the Department of Education.

NLTA Executive member Dean Ingram presented each teacher candidate individually with a scroll outlining the Teacher's Affirmation of Professional Responsibility and an NLTA pin which had engraved on it the Convocation year. The apple has always been considered the symbol of education, and the pin is a miniature apple, cast in pewter and engraved with the NLTA logo and the current year. It is meant to symbolize and to mark the significant occasion of their induction into the teaching profession and entry into the membership of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. All teacher candidates were congratulated by Dr. Dibbon.

Special thanks to the planners for this event: from NLTA – Susan Cardoulis; from the Faculty of Education – Susan Hicks and Valarie James.

Frequently Asked Questions

Clause 49.04 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Clause 49.04 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) states: *For salary purposes, substitute teachers shall be deemed to have kept school on any day or part thereof where: (a) the school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act, 1997; or (b) previously contracted substitute services are not required for any other reason(s) and the substitute teacher is not notified prior to reporting for duty at the school that his or her services are not required.*

Q. If a substitute teacher is contracted to work at a school on a particular day or for a particular contract period and that school is subsequently closed due to inclement weather, lack of heating, or other similar causes, is the substitute teacher entitled to be paid for the day or days? (Refer to Clause 49.04(a) – Provincial Collective Agreement: Clause 46.04(a) – Labrador West Collective Agreement.

A. Yes. Section 32: Teaching Days of the Schools Act, 1997 states that "a teacher in a school shall, for the purpose of determining payment of salary, be considered to have taught on a day or part of it when school" is:
(a) closed "because of inclement weather...";
(b) closed "by order of the minister responsible for health...";
(c) closed "by the board...";
(d) "declared uninhabitable by the board because of fire, storm, failure of the sewage system or other cause of a similar nature";
(e) closed "because the teacher was unavoidably prevented from opening the school because of delay in construction..., remodeling or renovations... and the minister is satisfied that no alternative accommodation was available";
(f) closed "because of a lack of heating or for other reason, where, in the opinion of the minister, the closing of the school could not have been avoided by the teacher"; or
(g) "the teacher is required to act as a member of a board of arbitration established in accordance with the collective agreement as defined in the Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act...".

Q. Is a substitute teacher still entitled to receive pay if school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act and the teacher is notified prior to arriving at the school?

A. Yes. Substitute teachers, once contracted to work, are entitled to receive pay for any day or part thereof, *if school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Act*, regardless if they are contacted prior to arriving at the school. For example, if a substitute teacher is contracted a week in advance to substitute for a teacher who is going to be absent and on the day in question, the school is notified that there is going to be a scheduled power outage forcing the school to close, the substitute teacher will still be entitled to be paid, regardless if the substitute is contacted by the school and informed that the school will be closed. The substitute is deemed to have kept school on that day for the purpose of determining salary.

Q. Would a substitute teacher be entitled to receive pay if previous contracted service is cancelled for any other reason other than those listed in Section 32 of the Act and the substitute teacher is notified prior to reporting for duty at the school? (Refer to Clause 49.04(b) – Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 46:04 (b) – Labrador West Collective Agreement.)

A. No. If school remains open and the services of the substitute teacher are no longer required and the substitute teacher is notified prior to reporting for duty at the school, the substitute teacher is deemed *not* to have kept school on that day and thus would *not* be entitled to be paid. Scenario: A substitute teacher is contracted to work for a teacher who is scheduled to attend a professional development workshop. The day prior to the workshop, the workshop is cancelled and

the regular teacher is scheduled to return to work. As long as the substitute teacher is contacted "prior to reporting for duty at the school" he/she would *not* be entitled to pay. However, if the substitute is not notified prior to reporting for duty, then they are entitled to receive pay for the day in question.

Additional information on these issues can be found in the NLTA Infosheet #13 "Substitute Teacher Member and Benefits" at www.nlta.nl.ca. Go to "Publications", then "I" for Infosheets.

Q. When do teachers need a doctor's note to access paid sick leave?

A. Article 15.04 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 27.04 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) states, in part, as follows: *Sick leave with pay in excess of four (4) consecutive teaching days at any time or seven (7) teaching days in the aggregate in any school year shall not be awarded to a teacher unless a medical certificate satisfactory to the School Board has been submitted in respect thereof.*

Teachers are entitled to access their paid sick leave if they are unable to work due to "injury, illness or other disability" and may use up to a maximum of seven days of paid sick leave during a school year without being required to provide a doctor's note. However, regardless of whether a total of seven days has yet been used, any period of paid sick leave that exceeds four consecutive teaching days must be supported by a medical certificate. Once seven days in total have been used, a medical note is required for all further sick leave access during a school year. With this in mind, the NLTA generally recommends that teachers obtain a medical certificate whenever possible when accessing paid sick leave.

Situations sometimes arise when teachers need to use their paid sick leave but cannot obtain a doctor's note. In circumstances where a School Board is satisfied that it is not possible for the teacher to get a medical certificate, the Collective Agreement does provide for some alternative options, such as a note from a registered nurse or the School Board Chairperson. However, such an arrangement would have to be acceptable to the School Board.

This information has been prepared by Perry Downey and Stefanie Tuff. For information on these topics or other areas of Benefits and Economic Services, please contact any of the following: Don Ash, ext. 231, Perry Downey, ext. 226, Stefanie Tuff, ext. 232 or Steve Brooks, ext. 230.

Severance Pay

Maybe Only a Partial Rollover Available

by DON ASH

For the past 10 years I have confidently been informing retiring teachers at pre-retirement seminars that they can roll their severance pay into an RRSP using rollover credit that is available for retiring allowances. The good news is I am correct and that is accurate information. The bad news is that I can no longer confidently say that a teacher can roll all their severance into an RRSP.

Since 1996, there has been no further accumulation of rollover credit allowed by the Canada Revenue Agency and teachers retiring these days are getting close to not having sufficient rollover credit available to roll all their severance into an RRSP. Confused? Then please read on.

"As salaries increase and time goes on, it is clear under existing regulations that teachers will soon not have sufficient rollover credit."

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) allows a person to transfer part of his/her retiring allowance (severance pay) directly to an RRSP using rollover credit accumulated throughout his/her career up to 1996 (unrelated to one's normal RRSP space). The amount of rollover credit a teacher has is based on $2,000 for each year or part year of service before 1996, in which the teacher was employed by the employer who paid the retiring allowance.

As salaries increase and time goes on, it is clear under existing regulations that teachers will soon not have sufficient rollover credit. For example, a teacher retiring in 1996 with 30 years of pension service would have had 30 years times $2,000 per year or $60,000 retiring allowance credit available. No teacher in 1996 would have severance coming close to this amount and could roll all severance into an RRSP. A teacher retiring in 2006 with 30 years of pension service would have had 20 years times $2,000 per year or $40,000 retiring allowance credit available. Again, no teacher had severance to this amount. However, a teacher retiring in 2010 with 30 years service would not have accumulated rollover credit from 1997 to 2010 and would have only 16 years of rollover credit up to 1996 at $2,000 per year or $32,000. Thus, a teacher in this situation making over $80,000 per year would not have sufficient rollover credit to roll over all his/her severance. By 2020, a teacher with 30 years service would only have six years at $2,000 of rollover credit.

The purpose of writing this article is to alert teachers to this information and to advise teachers to begin financial planning. Financial matters can be confusing and are frequently changing. Tax Free Savings Accounts are being introduced in January 2009. It is a matter of debate or opinion whether Tax Free Savings Accounts will be more beneficial to teachers than RRSPs. Pension income splitting also has the potential to change one's investment strategy. As teachers, you most likely do not have time to keep up with these changing financial instruments and conditions. Thus the final message in this article is to emphasize the importance for teachers to seek the advice or input from a certified financial planner. The earlier in one's career that sound financial advice is sought and sound financial planning occurs, the better.

Don Ash is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.

Web 2.0 and You

by JIM MURPHY

Recently, I spoke to a company representative from a software firm. I was asking about a particular feature about which I was interested in learning more and could not seem to find much reference to in the documentation. The person replied saying, "It would be easier if I showed you a movie."

"Mmmm," thought I, "I like a good movie as much as the next," so I agreed to this method of responding to my question. Sure enough, in about ten minutes, I received via email a small movie, showing me in minute, click-by-click detail, the exact actions to take to enable the features of the software about which I had enquired. "Wow!" I exclaimed. "That was a great movie!"

Of course, what I had received was an SWF or flash movie that had been recorded using some "free" software (google "jing" here) and was subsequently sent as a link to an online repository. The ever helpful company rep also informed me that there is a "webinar" available that explains in full detail the features that interested me. Webinars, live or pre-recorded, are seminars for the web and come in many different forms and formats. As tools such as these continue to emerge, it is necessary to weigh their worth as educational tools and "where they fit" as teaching and professional development resources. The Web, as we know it, is evolving rapidly into a social/interpersonal landscape where terms such as Web 2.0, blogs, podcasts, webinars and social networks are everyday vocabulary. Think of Web 2.0 as a two-way medium where you, the user, can become a content publisher. These tools promote collaboration and engagement amongst peers and groups with common interests, which is why they have grown so rapidly. So, where can these tools be of use to educators, particularly in the area of professional development?

Current research points to several key professional development practices that positively impact learning. DuFour, in his book entitled *Professional Learning Communities at Work*, indicates that professional development should be ongoing and collaborative in nature. Many new Web 2.0 tools support the opportunity for teachers to interact professionally in online learning communities. They offer tools such as forums, blogs, wikis, and media spaces where educators can share best practices and resources or dialogue on professional issues. If you are not currently a member of an online community, there are many social/professional networking sites for teachers, including:

- http://www.classroom20.com/
- http://apprendre2point0.ning.com/
- http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go

A more complete list of social/professional networking sites with an educational theme is available at http://socialnetworksined.wikispaces.com/.

Teachers can, through these networking spaces, receive and provide peer support beyond their schools. They can interact with other educators using collaborative tools such as forums and blogs and share resources by uploading files to a media folder for other members to access.

The Virtual Teacher Centre, in partnership with the NLTA and CDLI, is undertaking to offer educators in the province opportunities to collaborate and share ideas and find timely resources that support and enhance teaching and learning. Users will continue to find all the regular features of the site, but will notice that it has been enhanced with new tools that will allow them to post content and interact with colleagues. These new features will be available to educators in the province and beyond early in the new year. As we move forward towards this new, collaborative approach, consider the possibilities for you as an educator to share your wealth of knowledge with others while interacting with educators across the province and beyond.

To end, "If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas." ~ George Bernard Shaw

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.

The Challenges of Respecting Our Colleagues

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

Respect is an intellectual and a behavioural response to the mental processing of our personal value system. Although respect can be automatic when the influences in our environment align with our personal beliefs, expressing respect can also be a mental decision as well as a behavioural challenge when we behave the way "we should" instead of the way "we feel"!

In practical terms, what does respecting our colleagues mean?

Respect is about our values, attitudes and feelings which are expressed in our language and actions. We act according to what we believe. If we value diversity and believe that each person has equal rights, we are able to accept individuals with beliefs which are contrary to our own. This does not equate to adopting or condoning beliefs or practices which are not ours. Nor does it mean that we accept behaviours which are below the identified standards of our workplace. It does mean that we learn to live and work in a common environment while abiding by an identified set of behavioural guidelines.

We can look at a spectrum where minimal standards are identified at the low end and optimal conditions are in place at the high end of the spectrum. The lowest acceptable level of respect which can be tolerated in the workplace is a polite tolerance of collegial differences. This is apparent to us when (out of respect) we "bite our tongue"! The highest level would come close to admiration and reverence. This is how we feel about a colleague whom we wish to emulate in the style, interpersonal skills, knowledge, professionalism, or other characteristics. However, for most of our work relationships, we fall somewhere in between those two extremes. We offer and expect a level of interpersonal interaction which incorporates: courteous language and behaviour; accommodation; cooperation; appreciation; personal value; acceptance; and a sense of belonging.

The key to workplace respect is in defining a core set of behaviours which are essential in a workplace. Although different cultures, communities, professions may have diametrically opposed views on what is acceptable behaviour, harmony can only be maintained in the workplace if there is an understanding and acceptance of behavioural standards or "rules".

The Golden Rule

Although we can readily identify the way we want to be treated and the atmosphere we want in our workplace, we may not notice that we sometimes exhibit problematic behaviours. Some of these behaviours may interfere with a colleague's comfort in our common work environment. This is certainly not what we want to create nor endure at work. To avoid this we need clearly stated and understood guidelines; we need to follow the established expectations for behaviour and language; and, we need to increase our awareness of the needs and issues specific to our work environment or our colleagues. To go a little further, we also must be willing to address issues of discomfort by listening to a colleague's concerns, or bring our concerns to the appropriate colleague.

Is this something about which we need reminding?

When expressing respect, as with any form of communication, there is room for misunderstanding through inaccurate interpretation and unintentional messages. Each of us can offer examples of distress caused by misunderstandings or misinterpretation of information in the messages we have sent. This is a result of us sending a message without adequately clear information or for some other reason the receiver did not get the message we intended. Our "intended" message transmission is particularly susceptible to problems in situations where we already have an internal conflict between what we feel or believe and what we choose to say. Beware! Our body language betrays our verbal language when the two are not in agreement. Disrespect is not only expressed verbally but is also visible in our actions and body's response.

How do we address the challenge

... of saying what we believe is appropriate to say, while thinking or feeling something entirely different? A first step is to alter the way we think about the situation. We need not lie or be deceitful but we must remain respectful in our response to, or treatment of, others while maintaining our personal integrity. It might help to remind ourselves of a few relevant beliefs that we do hold: although we strive for it, we do not believe that we (or others) can attain perfection, we therefore must admit to some level of imperfection; we must accept diversity in personalities, character, and individual methods of operation; and, the way we choose to act or react is a reflection of who we are, not a reflection of our audience. When we acknowledge these truths, we can choose to act in a way that shows respect and integrity. Our message can be one which credits the input of others and, if necessary, acknowledges our personal views or reasonable objections.

Workplace Policies

The implementation of Respectful Workplace Policies provides a valuable beginning to establishing a climate of respect for our colleagues. It serves to clarify expectations for language and behaviour, as well as, to show that the organization values a certain standard of "respectful behaviour". Such policies include a list of behaviours that should not be present in the workplace and the consequences if those behaviours are present. Unfortunately, too often the emphasis is on the potential for negative influences within the workplace without an expressed awareness of the positive influences. The policy is designed to prevent behaviours which interfere with employee dignity. However, to promote the development of a work environment which encourages employees to thrive, policies could also include a description of the positive components which should be part of the work environment. These are the things which result in employees feeling good about themselves in their work, workplace and relationships with colleagues. When describing their experiences in a respectful workplace, employees tend to identify feelings of value, courtesy, consideration, belonging and professionalism. These are the conditions in which respect for colleagues can flourish.

Benefits of Respect

The most critical factors that make our environment a positive place relate to the attitudes we hold about how we are treated, how we feel and the relationships we develop. How we value our colleagues reflects how we feel valued and is displayed by our behaviour in our workplace. Developing supportive relationships with colleagues offers many benefits. The primary benefit is that the relationship gives us an accessible source of personal reinforcement! Whether we are looking for an objective perspective or a compassionate ear, engaging in mutually respectful interactions ensures that we can trust a colleague. "We all need somebody sometime". The professional reassurance, the sense of mutual concern and the overall feeling of belonging each contribute to our personal benefits of treating our colleagues as we want to be treated.

For related articles on workplace health see: *Create a Healthy Workplace*, September 2007; *Overcoming Obstacles to a Healthy Workplace*, April 2005.

Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidental assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

Motivating Students to Learn

by GEORGE TUCKER

As an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, I enjoy the privilege of traveling throughout the province facilitating professional development sessions on a variety of topics. During the last year or so, there has been growing interest in the topic of student motivation.

Research has clearly shown that good everyday teaching practices can do more to counter student apathy than special efforts to attack motivation directly. In fact, most students respond positively to a well-organized course taught by an enthusiastic teacher who has a genuine interest in students and what they are learning. Thus, activities that teachers undertake to promote learning will also enhance students' motivation.

An abundance of research is quite clear on the different modes of presentation utilized by teachers and the retention of content by students as outlined by the chart below.

Teaching Strategies and Retention of Content

- Lecture.....5%
- Reading.....10%
- Audio-Visual.....15%
- Demonstration.....30%
- Discussion Groups.....50%
- Practice by doing.....75%
- **Teaching Others..... 90%**

Strategies for Increasing Student Motivation at the Classroom Level

Briefly outlined below are a few strategies that may help you to motivate your students.

✓ Make students active participants in learning.
- Students learn by doing, making, writing, designing, creating, solving. Passivity dampens students' motivation and curiosity.
- Pose questions.
- Don't tell students something when you can ask them.
- Encourage students to suggest approaches to a problem or to guess the results of an experiment.

✓ Use "group" work.
- Pose questions.
- Have students [teach others]. Use the 'pair/share' technique or have the student(s) present to their whole group or another audience. Remember: Teaching others is the most effective way to learn... 90% retention. Students must also engage differently with subject content when there is an expectation that they are responsible for teaching the material to their peers.
- Have students publish their work by creating a PowerPoint presentation, dramatization, song, essay, Blog, etc. Students, like adults, are more highly motivated to complete a task when there is a clear, meaningful purpose.

✓ Ask students to analyze what makes their class experiences more or less "motivating".
- Ask your students to recall two recent class periods, one in which they were highly motivated and one in which their motivation was low. Each student makes a list of specific aspects of the two classes that influenced his or her level of motivation, and students then meet in small groups to reach consensus on characteristics that contribute to high and low motivation. Discuss their insights. Adjust your teaching accordingly.

✓ Tell students what they need to do to succeed in your course.
- Don't let your students struggle to figure out what is expected of them. Reassure students that they can do well in your course, and tell them exactly what they must do to succeed.
- Ensure that classroom expectations for performance and behaviour are clear and consistent. Help students understand the criteria for individual assignments by giving them exemplars of high-, average-, and low-level work and then providing an opportunity to discuss how each piece was evaluated. When applicable, involve your students in the development of the rubrics being used.
- Remember that a student's basic psychological needs must be satisfied if s/he is to be emotionally healthy. These basic psychological needs are:

Belonging or connecting; Power or competence; Freedom; Fun

- ✓ Make students feel welcome and supported. Take time to get to know students, talk to them individually, and "express enjoyment in your interactions."
- ✓ Break large tasks into a series of smaller goals/deadlines. For example, when assigning a project/assignment, set a specific deadline for students to submit: the proposal; jot-notes; first draft; second draft; final product. By breaking large tasks into a series of smaller goals/deadlines, you, the teacher, can provide feedback and stay on top of procrastinators. It will also prevent students from becoming overwhelmed and discouraged by lengthy projects.
- ✓ Respond positively to student questions, and praise students verbally for work done.
- ✓ Work to build quality relationships with students, especially those considered at-risk and without other positive adult interaction. This is a critical factor of student engagement that allows children to foster a sense of connection with school.
- ✓ Help students find personal meaning and value in the material.
- ✓ Create an atmosphere that is open and positive.
- ✓ Help students feel that they are valued members of a 'learning community'. Remember: "Students won't care what you know until they know that you care."
- ✓ Promote mastery learning. When a student completes an assignment that does not meet the expected criteria, give her or him one or more opportunities to tackle the task again, with guidelines on how to achieve the desired result.
- ✓ Vary your teaching methods. Variety reawakens students' involvement in the course and their motivation. Break the routine by incorporating a variety of teaching activities and methods in your course: role playing; debates; brainstorming; discussion; demonstrations; case studies; audio-visual presentations; guest speakers; group work.
- ✓ Increase the difficulty of the material as the semester progresses. Give students opportunities to succeed at the beginning of the semester. Once students feel they can succeed, you can gradually increase the difficulty level. A frog gets used to the water as it gets hotter, if they start out at a comfortable temperature. If assignments and exams include easier and harder questions, every student will have a chance to experience success as well as challenge.
- ✓ Research indicates that the same eight characteristics consistently emerge as major contributors to student motivation. The characteristics are:
  - Teacher's enthusiasm
  - Relevance of the material
  - Organization of the course
  - Appropriate difficulty level of the material
  - Active involvement of students
  - Variety
  - Rapport between teacher and students
  - Use of appropriate, concrete, and understandable examples

In concluding, suffice it to say that there is ample research that demonstrates that school practices can and do affect a student's level of motivation. While some students seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, many need – or expect – their teachers to inspire, challenge, and stimulate them. The reality is that effective learning in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability to maintain the interest of their students. Whatever level of motivation your students bring to the classroom will be transformed, for better or worse, by what happens in the classroom. And, teachers should never under-estimate their ability to make a difference in the life of a child.

If you are interested in additional information on 'motivating students to learn' or if you are keen on a PD session on the topic, please contact George Tucker at gtucker@nlta.nl.ca.

George Tucker is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Education Week 2009
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Further information and resource materials
will be forwarded to schools
as soon as they become available.

A Turkey Stuffed With Pride

by BEVERLEY PARK

Christmas is coming and that got me thinking of turkeys and a very special story that, despite its personal connection, needs to be shared. Before I tell you my very special turkey story it is important that you have a context for it.

We all have things on our "to do" list that we would just rather not have to do. Our response in that circumstance varies. Some of us have that "just do it and get it over with" way of operating. They're the ones who, when going for a swim in a cold lake, jump in and immediately dunk their whole body into the water. Some of us do "everything but"; avoidance of a particular task can lead to clean closets, polished silver and any number of prepared meals in the freezer as we sidestep the task. These are people who get their toes wet, then five minutes later go ankle deep and then up to the knees in the water. They have to do it in their own way in their own time – but eventually they're submerged.

I am of the latter type. So, when the task came to me to sort through my mom's personal treasures following her death last year, it was not surprising to anyone that I found plenty of things to do to delay the inevitable. When I finally did find myself sitting alone in her house, the house that will always be Mom's, I found that the delay had allowed me to mentally prepare myself, to be ready to take the plunge.

It was a rather strange experience to re-discover a person I had known all my life through the things she held dear and kept over the years. Most items would have little or no monetary value but as soon as I opened a box or an envelope or a drawer to reveal a scrap of paper or a memento, I speculated as to why she saved that particular thing. As the items piled up, themes started to emerge. Even if the person sorting the items had not known my mother, those treasures revealed who she was as much as any living conversation. The items spoke loudly and clearly about the woman who had lovingly stashed and stored them in a house that was too small. Her values were evident in the things she valued enough to keep.

From the photos, some tracing people from their hospital birth pictures through high school and university graduations, weddings and then their own "Family Pictures", it was obvious that Mom absolutely loved her family. Then there were cards – postcards, Mother's Day cards, birthday cards, Christmas and Easter cards …from children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, from years and years. You might think that these take up valuable space in a home. All I could think was what a valuable space they had in her heart. When I was able to stack them by family and return them to people, they were a wonderful way for her to say one last time how much it meant to her that we all sent those cards and photos. Most of them had personal notes, some with promises to do chores like hang a new clothesline or to build a deck – promises which were always kept – because she had taught us that too.

Going through the hundreds of scraps of newspaper clippings or handwritten notes for herself, I was reminded of how Mom had always been deeply moved by the power of words. Sometimes a yellowed piece of paper contained a prayer, sometimes a poem or a quote. She valued good writing and, though not formally schooled at a high level, she was highly educated. (She took great pride in beating her schoolteacher daughter at Scrabble!)

From the boxes of empty bottles and saved twist ties and scraps of line (even that twine that holds turkeys together was washed and dried) I realized that, as in many other ways, Mom was before her time when it came to reusing and recycling. Her dedication to not wasting was learned the hard way – lived through times when there was not enough to suffice, let alone waste.

I knew that Mom had great faith which was confirmed when I found two sets of prayer and hymn books that she had literally worn out. (Of course she kept them. How do you throw out a prayer book?)

I smiled when I found the artifacts of her love of politics – and I remembered her feminist side (not a

label she would use for sure). She had a mind of her own and didn't depend on her husband or anyone else to tell her how to vote. She wasn't a Liberal or a Tory or an NDP"er". There was evidence that she was all of those things – over time.

There were a few (though not many) items that were my father's, dead now more than 25 years. Mom and Dad were good together, even if they made a rather odd couple – he towering 6 feet 4 inches over her tiny, barely five-foot frame. They were good together because they shared values of the kind that make you keep cards and photos and empty bottles and bits of string. And now, (finally you say) the turkey story.

In Mom's very special treasures I found something that I think was the ultimate symbol of the values my parents gave to me … that of pride in hard work, and the importance of recognizing that quality in others. It was a letter addressed to my father: Mr. Park. The letter was from the Manager of Bowater and Company, Corner Brook, where my father worked as a stevedore with a work crew loading and unloading paper boats. It stated that on a given 8-hour shift, Dad and the others in his gang, had beaten all records for the number of tons of paper loaded. Furthermore, this work crew had been consistently posting very high numbers. The Manager was writing to express not only his thanks, but his recognition of the skill, work ethic and dedication shown by my father. By way of acknowledgement, my father could turn in this letter to (a local business) in exchange for a 15 lb. turkey. The letter was dated December 1955 when, as a young man, Dad would already have had seven kids, one just a baby, and Christmas on the horizon.

Considering the circumstances, this turkey would have been a significant reward. Given that, why was I holding the letter more than 50 years later? I think I know. I'd like to think that the store allowed him to keep the letter and have the turkey too, but I suspect not. I am guessing that the turkey was not nearly as significant as the words written by that Manager. Ironically, my father could not have read the letter (or done so with great difficulty). He did not have the privilege of going to school. I suspect Mom would have read it out loud – to him first and then to anyone who would listen. I can just imagine the looks of pride on their faces.

Work, and not just doing a job, but doing it well, was incredibly important to both my parents. They instilled it in every one of the eight kids – and I sense that there's another generation that's getting the message too. That doesn't mean that you have to be a doctor or lawyer or (there's not one in the family!). It means that whatever you do – be it a stevedore or teacher or a client services manager or a cook or a librarian or an accountant or a welder, you do it with dedication and commitment – and you do it well.

I am glad that he didn't take the turkey… so that I could find that letter. It has reminded me why I am who I am; why I do as I do. It reminded me that a simple note to acknowledge a job well done is as important, perhaps more significant, than tangible things. This Christmas, instead of agonizing over what gift you may get for a colleague you appreciate, why not write a note to thank them for the work they do and the fine way they do it. You may be the recipient of such a note. Maybe then you will understand why he didn't take the turkey.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

NLTA Teachers Tour the Canadian Battlefields

by LINDA O'REILLY

"Places that I've read in books, saw on Memorials, and taught students of in class, are now real to me after having walked the same ground that thousands of Canadian soldiers had worked, fought, and died in the two World Wars."

The experience of a lifetime is the only way to describe the ten days I spent touring the Battlefields of France and Belgium this past July. I, along with fellow Newfoundlander Tina Ford from Bell Island, and 16 other high school teachers from across Canada formed a band of teachers that had the privilege of participating in the 2008 Canadian Battlefields Study Tour sponsored by Historica, Veterans Affairs Canada, and Canadian Battlefields Foundation.

Places that I've read in books, saw on Memorials, and taught students of in class, are now real to me after having walked the same ground that thousands of Canadian soldiers had walked, fought, and died in the two World Wars. The tour took us on a pilgrimage that began in Ypres and the Flanders Museum as well as John McCrae's Surgical Station. We had the privilege to lay a wreath at Menin Gate during a Memorial service that has seen the Last Post being played in this Belgium town for close to ninety years. Next, the group explored the areas of the second and third battles of Ypres (1915 and 1917), including Passandaele. Incredibly, it wasn't difficult to imagine the loss and destruction even though the battlefields are now beautiful fields of wheat, barley, and corn. Evidence of The Great War lie on the surface as shrapnel, shell casings, and barbed wire are visible; as are explosive craters now disguised as grass covered dips along the roadside. On day four we visited the Vimy Ridge Memorial and were overcome with an intense sense of pride...and loss. The magnificent white stones and statues are carved with the names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers lost in the First World War. As a group we had our picture taken with the Canadian flag; Canadian teachers from all across the country sharing in a moment of remembrance.

Every teacher did remember. In fact, an integral part of the Battlefield Study Tour was the requirement that each teacher present a brief biographical sketch of a soldier at a specific cemetery or memorial where the soldier is buried or commemorated. I had the honour of standing for Pte. Douglas Snow, age 19, who was killed in action at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916. As I spoke, next to Pte. Snow's white headstone, I felt as if I were speaking for all those valiant Newfoundlanders knowing that "where once they stood" I was now standing. Under the gaze of the majestic caribou, I "tread softly" amid the trenches and spoke softly for all those back home.

A fellow Nova Scotian teacher, myself, and Tina Ford near the Danger tree of Beaumont-Hamel.

At the halfway point of the tour, the focus moved to the battlefields of the Second World War. We took part in tactical exercises without troops (TEWT) on the beaches of Dieppe and Juno as well as on the back roads that led to well known places in Canadian

history where our soldiers faced and stood ground against the 12th SS Panzer Division: the airport of Carpiquet, the town of Caen, and the Falaise Gap. As a group we paid homage to the sacrifice and bravery displayed in 1944 on the beaches of Omaha.

Indeed, the trip was an intense journey that brought this group of Canadian teachers together as a band. We did find time to share great meals, wine, and pastry. We were the guests of honour at a Remembrance Ceremony that saw the unveiling of a new monument in memory of Canadian soldiers that fought in Normandy. It was a proud moment for us all when our National Anthem was played in the main square of this small French village and the voices of 18 Canadian teachers could be heard singing the words, "O Canada". Everywhere we went with our Canadian flags clearly visible in our travel van's window, we were greeted with French smiles, gratitude, handshakes, and wine.

The Battlefield Tour group and our guides at Vimy Ridge.

The task now for all that toured the battlefields this summer is to find ways to bring the experience and knowledge into the classroom. The Historica Foundation encourages each participant to create and share lesson plans centered around some aspect of the Great War and/or the Second World War. These can be easily accessed by all Canadian teachers at: www.histori.ca.

Linda O'Reilly is a teacher at St. Kevin's High School in Goulds, NL.

New Teacher Profile
Carla Laing

Name: Carla Laing

School: Stephenville Elementary

School Board: Western School District

Number of Years in the Profession:
I will be teaching one year in January 2009, but only in a position since September. (I substituted from January 08 - June 08)

Number of schools you have taught in so far:
Since the completion of my internship at Stephenville Primary School, I have substituted at Stephenville Primary and Elementary, as well as Directions Alternative School, all located in the Stephenville area.

Education Degree(s) and where you received it:
Bachelor of Education (Primary/Elementary) with a focus area in science, received from Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, May 2008.

I was born and raised in the Stephenville area, and I was once a student of the same school in which I now teach. From as far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a teacher. I can remember playing school as a little girl, and when my brother went to school (he is a year and a half older than I am) it took both my mom and his Kindergarten teacher to pry my fingers off the door casing because I wanted to go to school too.

Once I got to high school and a career path was much closer in my future I made my final decision to become a teacher, and I decided I would start my degree at Memorial University in Corner Brook and transfer to St. John's in my third year.

Although I am very proud of my accomplishment of becoming a teacher, it did come at a cost. University was never easy, and always presented a number of challenges. It meant time away from family and friends as well as my fiancé, and being a very family oriented person made that aspect very difficult for me. There were many long nights, stressful days, and times when I thought I was never going to make it through. It was definitely a lot of hard work, time, and dedication, but I have always been a believer that the harder you have to work to get something, the more you want it, and the more you appreciate it in the end.

Having said this, there is nothing I would change. University was one of the best experiences I have ever had. I met some amazing people during those five years that have become a very important part of my life.

The best part about being a teacher:
Seeing the smiling faces of my students everyday when I walk in my classroom, and knowing, through their accomplishments, that they are learning and at the same time growing and becoming very responsible, creative, talented and independent young people.

The hardest part about being a teacher:
Knowing that I cannot provide, to every single child, every minute of the day, the support or enrichment that is best suited to their individual needs. I have many great ideas, as do many teachers, which I would love to use in my classroom, but time restraints restrict me from doing just that. I am only one person working with up to 25 or more children. As long as I know I have tried my best, sometimes that has to be enough; however, as a teacher you never feel it is and you always want to give more, and too often that can impact on your own life.

Accomplishments you are most proud of:
Fulfilling my dream of becoming a teacher.

Activities and committees you have been involved with:
F&ST (Families and Schools Together), Bookfair, Special Services, Literacy, Science Fair.

Dream item for your classroom:
A new computer with a projector. In society today, I feel it is of utmost importance for children to become aware of, and learn how to use many different types of technology. This form of communication, information gathering, and education is a key concept for their generation. Many schools have computers to share from classroom to classroom, but often times other teachers may be using it, have it booked, or because it is not easily accessible teachers pass the chance to use these resources as part of their everyday routines and lessons.

Fill in the blank *"I wish someone had told me …"*:
…that you will often feel like you're getting nothing done because your lesson plan over exceeded what your students were capable of doing. However, that does not mean that you are not a good teacher because they are taking a long time with something. It means you're a great teacher because you are well planned and you have taught them to take their time with their work, add details, and take pride in what they do.

Advice for new teachers:
You are only one person. Try your best, and then try again. As long as you know and feel you did, that is all that matters. Never give up; there are going to be tough days, they happen no matter where you are, or what you're doing. Take a deep breath pick up your head and tell yourself "I can do this!" Most importantly, do not forget about you. Take time for yourself; you are very important to your students, and they need you. If you forget about yourself and put all your efforts into your work and your students it will not take you long to become sick or get burnt out.

Favourite inspirational quote:
"If the child is not learning the way you are teaching, then you must teach in the way the child learns." (Rita Dunn)

Plans for the future:
In the not too far away future I plan to complete my masters, most likely in literacy or computer technology. At this time I am still undecided as to which university I will be completing my program.

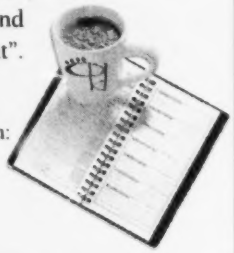
Closing Comment:
It is so very important to meet the needs of all children, and all children do not learn in the same ways; therefore, it is important that teachers provide different learning experiences to meet all the needs in their classroom.

Carla can be reached at carla_laing@msn.com

Your Guide to Planning and Hosting School-Based Professional Development

In recent years more and more schools have been hosting their own school-based professional development. While, for the most part, those have proven to be excellent learning, sharing, and growing opportunities, for those who are tasked with planning these events it means a lot of time and effort.

A group of teachers and administrators involved in the Leadership at Work program in the Central District recognized the need for a planning tool which could assist a school-based team in hosting a professional development session for collegues. Along with the staff in the Professional Development Division at NLTA, this group has developed "Your Guide to Planning and Hosting School-Based Professional Development".



This very practical guide is available free of charge by contacting the Professional Development Division:
scardoulis@nlta.nl.ca
726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH CONFERENCE

April 22-24, 2009

Saskatoon, SK. Where It's AT: Teams Using Learning Technology. Speakers: Kelly S. Fonner, MS, Educational and Assistive Technology Consultant and Scott Marfilius, MA, Educational and Assistive Technology Consultant. Topics: *Integration of Assistive Technology into the Classroom* and *Literacy for All – Supports Through Assistive Technology*; plus breakout sessions and computer lab on Day 3. For information contact: Events of Distinction, eofd@sasktel.net; Tel: 306-651-3118; Fax: 306-651-3119.

PROVINCIAL SAC CONFERENCE

May 20-22, 2009

Terra Nova Golf Resort. Theme: *Leadership That Matters*. For information contact: George Tucker, Administrative Staff Officer, PD Division, NLTA, gtucker@nlta.nl.ca, Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; or Glenn Harnum, Principal, Exploits Valley Intermediate, glennharnum@ncsd.ca, Tel: 709-489-5608.

LANGUAGES WITHOUT BORDERS: NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATORS 2009

May 21-23, 2009

Edmonton, AB. *Exploring New Frontiers in Language and Culture Education.* The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers and the Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education at Edmonton Public Schools invite you to the National Conference for Second Language Educators. Participate in an exciting opportunity to connect with colleagues from across Canada and around the world. For information or to register: www.caslt.org.

2008-09 Convention and Province-Wide Vote Deadlines

December 3, 2008

- All nominations for Office of President/Vice-President must be postmarked by this date for publication in Election issue of *The Bulletin.*
- Photograph, biographical sketch and election statement of nominees for Office of President/Vice-President must be postmarked by this date for publication in Election issue of *The Bulletin.*

December 30, 2008

Deadline for mailing of election posters to schools.

January 3, 2009

Mailing of Election issue of *The Bulletin.*

January 4, 2009

Final deadline for receipt of nominations for Offices of President and Vice-President.

January 15, 2009

Proposed change, amendment or repeal of NLTA By-Laws to be actioned by Convention must be presented in writing to the NLTA.

February 3, 2009

Province-wide vote for the election of President and Vice-President.

February 15, 2009

- All nominations for Provincial Executive for publication in Convention issue of *The Bulletin* must be postmarked or hand delivered to NLTA Office.
- Names of elected delegates and alternates to Convention should be forwarded to NLTA Office for printing in Convention issue of *The Bulletin.*
- Resolutions to Convention must be received at the NLTA Office.

February 17, 2009

Run-off ballot for the election of President and Vice-President (if required).

March 15, 2009

Mailing of Convention issue of *The Bulletin.*

April 14-17, 2009

Biennial General Meeting

April 16, 2009

Final deadline for receipt of nominations for Provincial Executive.

Dates to Remember

December 2008

Dec 4-5	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Dec 15	**Department Deadline:** Teacher Exchange applications to Ontario

January 2009

Jan 15	**Deadline:** 2009 Christmas Card Contest entries
Jan 15	**Deadline:** Receipt of Barnes, Bancroft, Allan Bishop, and Special Recognition Award Nominations at the NLTA office
Jan 15	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

February 2009

Feb 1	Deadline: Applications for Educational Leave - teachers must make prior application to school board
Feb 13	Janeway Day in the Schools
Feb. 26	NLTA Executive Meeting
Feb. 27-28	Joint Council Meeting